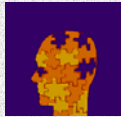


Introduction to Special Education: Making a Difference Sixth Edition

Chapter 13

Very Low Incidence Disabilities: Multiple-Severe Disabilities, Deaf-Blindness, and Traumatic Brain Injury

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Chapter Objectives

- Explain the major characteristics of students with multiple-severe disabilities.
- Describe the impact of deaf-blindness.
- Discuss how cases of traumatic brain injury (TBI) can be prevented.
- Explain alternate assessments and what they mean for students with low incidence disabilities.
- List the key elements of functional behavioral assessments (FBA).

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Prevalence

- Only 0.23% of American students, ages 6-21, have multiple disabilities.
- Requirements for each state are different:
 - Some states do not include learning disabilities or hearing problems in this category
 - All students are served in ways that meet their unique needs

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Causes and Prevention

- Multiple factors cause disabilities:
 - Heredity
 - Problems during pregnancy
 - Problems at birth
 - Incidents after birth
 - Low birth weight
 - Unknown factors
- Prevention should include:
 - Pre-pregnancy determination of risk factors
 - Good prenatal care
 - Access to health care
 - Public awareness of prevention strategies

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Multiple-Severe Disabilities Defined

- IDEA '04 defines multiple-severe disabilities as a separate special education category
- The term *developmental disabilities* (used by the Centers for Disease Control) is often used interchangeably with *multiple-severe disabilities*
- Multiple-severe disabilities is defined as: severe disabilities that combine intellectual and physical problems

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Characteristics of Multiple-Severe Disabilities

- Students may have trouble:
 - Generalizing information
 - Communicating
 - With memory
 - Participating in the community without supports
- Students may have medical problems such as:
 - Seizure disorders
 - Vision or hearing
 - Heart disease
 - Cerebral palsy



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Deaf-Blindness Defined

- Deaf-Blindness has been a separate special education category since 1969.
- Many of these youngsters have other disabilities besides their visual and hearing problems.
- 21% have low vision
- 24% are legally blind
- Majority have some residual hearing and/or vision
- Almost half have enough residual vision to allow them to read enlarged print
- 7% of students attend general education classes
- Almost 30% receive their education in separate special education classes



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Prevalence, Causes, and Prevention

- Prevalence:
 - The National Deaf-blind Census reports 9,853 identified students in 2003-2004
 - The U.S. Department of Education reported 1,667
 - Discrepancy is due to the fact that states only need to report a student's disabilities in one area
- Causes:
 - Associated with the following factors:
 - Pre-maturity
 - Heredity causes
 - Risk factors including poverty and access to health care
- Prevention
 - Risk factors can be reduced with systematic national prevention programs

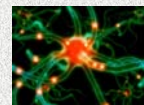
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Characteristics of Deaf-Blindness

- Students have restricted vision and hearing.
- The degree and amount is not uniform.
- Each individual is affected differently.
- At least 60% of students have physical disabilities in addition to this one.
- Cognitive disabilities are a common problem.
- Common problem areas include:
 - Feelings of isolation
 - Communication
 - Mobility

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Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)



- Before 1975 these students were served under the learning disabilities category.
- In 1990, Congress added TBI to special education list.
- It is estimated that every teacher will come in contact with a student with TBI.
- Medical advances since 1960s are saving more children, but some end up needing special education.
- One million children annually experience head injury – >30,000 result in lifelong disabilities
- TBI:
 - Is an acquired injury to the brain
 - Adversely affects educational performance
 - Refers to either open or closed head injuries
 - Does not include brain injuries at birth
 - Ranges from mild to severe
 - Can result in lifelong problems
 - Is not immediately recognized or diagnosed

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Prevalence, Causes, and Prevention

- Prevalence:
 - 22,509 students were served for TBI in the 2003–2004 school year
- Causes:
 - Car accidents
 - Bicycle accidents
 - Sports accidents
 - Falls on the playground
 - Child abuse (for children under 2)
- High-risk behaviors often cause TBI
- Common sense prevention measures include:
 - Wearing helmets
 - Not driving when intoxicated
 - Avoiding high-risk behaviors
 - Getting prompt medical attention and rehabilitation
 - Prevention education

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Characteristics of TBI

- TBI often includes these characteristics:
 - Seizures
 - Headaches
 - Hearing losses
 - Reduced stamina
 - Vision problems
 - Uneven abilities
 - May have behavior problems and reduced self esteem
 - Does not always result in long-term disability



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Early Childhood Through High School Education

- Families need to develop coping skills for dealing with the differences among their infants and young children.
- Most preschools are fully inclusive and assist with:
 - Motor development
 - Language skills
 - Academics
- Common goals are:
 - Communication skills
 - Participation in the community
- Foundation for these students should include:
 - Functional assessments
 - Educational decisions that are made on an individual basis
 - Instruction directly applied to the target behavior

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Early Childhood Through High School Education

- Collaboration includes all members of the multidisciplinary team.
- Accommodations are made for the unique learning styles of each student.
- Use of:
 - Learning organizers
 - Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA)



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Technology

- Technology helps students:
 - Communicate more effectively
 - Increase levels of independence
 - Have greater mobility
 - Control their environments
 - Gain access to information
- Augmentative and alternative communication devices (AAC)
 - Communication boards
 - Speech synthesizers
 - Communication books
 - Sign language

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Transition Through Adulthood

- Students with low incidence disabilities leave school at 21 instead of 18.
- After school, many receive supported living arrangements and employment services.
- As students get older, they receive more community-based instruction to foster learning from one setting to another.
- A transition plan begins for students by the age of 16.

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Families

- Educators must focus on the family's concerns, needs, capacity, and potential for providing support.
- Key concepts in creating family support include having the family:
 - Be the primary unit of concern
 - Remain active in the community
 - Be assisted in gaining access to support systems
 - Empowered to deal with the complexity of social service agencies
 - Receive services which are sensitive to their cultural diversity

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Challenge Question

- What comprises an appropriate education, and what comprises the least restrictive environment for students with low incidence disabilities?
 - There is no single answer because of students' complex, unique, and severe problems.
 - Supports required tend to be pervasive and intense.
 - Goals and instructional methods must be individualized to achieve independence, community presence, and quality of life.

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